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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 54/141 of 17 December 1999. It provides an overview of the provisions and recommendations for action contained in the Political Declaration and the final outcome document, entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", adopted by consensus at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 5 to 10 June 2000. The report focuses on areas where the Platform for Action has been strengthened and reinforced, on measures for its implementation at the national and international levels by Governments, the United Nations and its system of organizations, non-governmental organizations and other actors, and on those recommendations that have immediate implications for action at the international level, including those requiring consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

* A/55/150.

** Late submission of the report was owing to the recent conclusion of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to the request by the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/141 of 17 December 1999, that the Secretary-General prepare for the consideration of the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", held at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 10 June 2000.

2. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/231 of 4 June 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women acted as the preparatory committee for the special session of the Assembly and the Division for the Advancement of Women, under the guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, served as the substantive secretariat. Preparations for the special session were undertaken at the national, regional and international levels and were characterized by collaboration among Governments, the United Nations Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, and by the involvement and strong support of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as an extremely broad spectrum of non-governmental actors at the national, regional and international levels.

3. Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action[1] has been ongoing since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. By June 2000, 120 national action plans and strategies for implementation of the Platform for Action had been submitted by Governments. An analysis of these was reviewed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second, forty-third and forty-fourth sessions (E/CN.6/1998/6, E/CN.6/1999/2/Add.1 and E/CN.6/2000/2). In addition, consideration of the implementation of the strategic objectives and activities set forth for each of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action by Governments, intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations was part of the work programme of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women during the period from 1996 to 1999. As at 1 June 2000, 151 Governments had responded to the questionnaire on implementation of the Platform for Action, prepared in October 1998 by the Secretariat in collaboration with the five regional commissions. These served as a principal input to the review and appraisal report submitted to the Preparatory Committee (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2 and Corr.2-3). During this period, several critical decisions were taken by the Council to strengthen the implementation of the Platform for Action, including agreed conclusions 1997/2 adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 18 July 1997,[2] and Council resolutions 1998/43 of 31 July 1998 and 2000/26 of 28 July 2000. Important decisions were also reached by the Commission on the Status of Women which has adopted a number of agreed conclusions and resolutions since its thirty-ninth session to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action.[3]

4. Preparatory meetings were held in each of the five regional commissions, in response to General Assembly resolution 54/142 of 17 December 1999, which encouraged all regional commissions to carry out activities in support of the preparatory process in order to ensure a regional perspective on implementation and on further actions and initiatives. These meetings, which assessed the extent of regional implementation and drew up regional action plans, were held at Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva and Lima.

5. Many expert group meetings and seminars were organized by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations on aspects of the 12 critical areas of the Platform for Action, as part of preparations for the special session. These included an expert group meeting to identify emerging issues, trends and new approaches, convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women and hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at Beirut, from 8 to 10 November 1999.

6. During the eight-month period prior to the special session, intensive preparatory and coordination work took place at several levels. The Deputy Secretary-General chaired several sessions of the Meeting of United Nations and agency officials on the special session. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women established the Inter-agency Steering Committee for the Special Session, and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women met on a regular basis with representatives of key non-governmental organizations.

7. The special session was presided over by the President and Vice-Presidents of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. During its plenary meetings, statements were focused on both the progress made and the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Platform for Action. The plenary was addressed by 178 Member States, including two prime ministers, four vice-presidents, ministers and vice-ministers. Representatives of 3 non-Member States, 16 observers, 5 heads of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, 5 non-governmental organizations and the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women also addressed the plenary.

8. The special session was attended by a large number of participants from Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media. In addition, approximately 2,400 participants from non-governmental organizations registered for activities held outside the United Nations facilities. The special session also included many side events, panels, presentations and exhibitions organized by Governments, United Nations departments and agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The Commission on the Status of Women, acting as Preparatory Committee, sponsored three of the panels.

II. Implementation of and follow-up to the platform for action

A. Political Declaration and outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

9. By resolutions S-23/2 and S/23/3 of 10 June 2000, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the Political Declaration and the final outcome document, entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration[4] and platform for action" of its twenty-third special session. In the Political Declaration, Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and called for the implementation of the agreed conclusions and resolutions on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women since its thirty-ninth session. Governments recognized that they have primary responsibility for the full implementation of all commitments for the advancement of women and called for continued international cooperation. The Political Declaration further emphasized that men must involve themselves and take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality. The commitment of Governments to overcome obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action and to strengthening and safeguarding a national and international enabling environment, inter alia, through the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes and promoting women's full participation and empowerment was highlighted. Governments agreed to regularly assess further implementation of the Platform for Action with a view to bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, 10 years after the adoption of the Platform for Action and 20 years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.[5]

10. The outcome document outlines further actions and initiatives that need to be taken to ensure the full implementation of the Platform for Action in the context of global changes, new challenges and obstacles, and increased knowledge and experience accumulated on important gender equality issues during the past five years. The Political Declaration and the outcome document complement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which remain the basis for global action to promote gender equality, development and peace. Implementation of and follow-up to the Platform for Action and the outcome document should occur in tandem.

11. The Political Declaration and outcome document reaffirm the commitment by Governments to the global agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment established in 1995 in the Platform for Action and signify a recommitment to all 12 critical areas of concern. Governments agreed on 199 actions to be taken at national, regional and international levels by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, the media, trade unions and other actors. In a large number of areas, the commitment to women's empowerment and gender

mainstreaming was significantly strengthened and the complementarity between gender mainstreaming and special activities targeting women was confirmed. Many of the actions adopted a more focused or specific approach than in the Platform for Action, while others addressed areas that have emerged or become prominent since the Fourth World Conference on Women.

12. Emphasis was placed on women's access to decision-making at all levels, gender-sensitive approaches to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS); a gender perspective on macro-economic policies and programmes, including budget processes; violence against women, including trafficking of women and girls and in armed conflict; and the realization of women's full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and political rights. Actions also addressed the challenges presented by globalization to the implementation of the Platform for Action.

13. A number of important new targets are set in the outcome document and some existing targets were reaffirmed. These are:

(a) Closure of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and ensuring free compulsory and universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015;

(b) The achievement of a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, by continuing to support and strengthen national, regional and international adult literacy programmes;

(c) The creation and maintenance of a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legal environment by reviewing legislation with a view to striving to remove discriminatory provisions as soon as possible, preferably by 2005;

(d) Universal access to high quality primary health care throughout the life cycle, including sexual and reproductive health care, not later than 2015;

(e) The goal of 50/50 gender balance in all posts in the organizations of the United Nations system, including at the Professional level and above.

14. While reaffirming the strategic objectives with respect to violence against women, the outcome document, inter alia, emphasizes that violence against women and girls should be treated as a criminal offence punishable by law, that legislation should be established and/or appropriate mechanisms strengthened to handle criminal matters relating to all forms of domestic violence, and that measures should be taken to address through policies and programmes racism and racially motivated violence against women and girls.

15. With regard to trafficking in women and girls, Governments are requested to take measures to prevent the prosecution of trafficked women including the setting up or strengthening of a national coordinating mechanism, for example, a national rapporteur or inter-agency body, with participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to encourage the exchange of information and report on data, root causes, factors and trends in violence against women, in particular trafficking. Support for the ongoing negotiations on a draft protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which is to supplement the draft United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was to be provided by Governments and other actors, and national, regional and international strategies to reduce the risk to women and girls, including those who are refugees and displaced persons, as well as women migrant workers, of becoming victims of trafficking, were, as appropriate, to be pursued and supported. The introduction of an international "zero tolerance" campaign on violence against women was to be considered, as well as public campaigns to enhance public awareness of the unacceptability and social costs of violence.

16. In the context of women and armed conflict, awareness and knowledge of the Statute of the International Criminal Court adopted in Rome in June 1998 is advocated, as well as consideration of signing and ratifying that instrument. Policies and programmes for the protection of children, especially girls, during hostilities are to be developed and supported, in order to prohibit their forced recruitment and to promote and/or strengthen mechanisms for their rehabilitation and reintegration.

17. In the area of health, there is a clear strengthening of commitment with the identification of the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality as a health sector priority, the recognition of gender aspects of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency

syndrome (HIV/AIDS) which have a disproportionate impact on women's health, and the inclusion of women's access to health services as an issue for health sector reform initiatives, in particular rural and urban health service delivery to women living in poverty. With regard to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, the outcome document recommends the development of female-controlled methods and voluntary and confidential HIV testing and counselling, as well as the development of vaccines, diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. The need to design and implement programmes for men on safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour was also highlighted. The outcome document also endorses the agreement on abortion contained in the Platform for Action and in paragraph 8.25 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.[6]

18. Particular reference to the feminization of poverty and the need to assess the links between macroeconomic policies and gender is included in the outcome document. It indicates that globalization, structural adjustment policies, economic transition, trade liberalization and external debt servicing have differential impacts on women and men, with a particularly strong negative impact on women in poverty. The outcome document also urges the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all national policies and programmes on poverty eradication, as well as into macroeconomic policies and programmes. It underlines the importance of information and communications technology to enhance the employability of women and their access to quality jobs and encourages the education of girls in new technologies and technical subjects.

19. The outcome document recognizes that explicit attention to the goals of gender equality, development and peace in budgetary processes at national, regional and international levels is essential and calls for the incorporation of a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all budgetary processes, as appropriate, and the establishment of adequate budgetary allocations to support gender equality and development programmes that enhance women's empowerment. It calls for specific measures to achieve women's equal participation in macroeconomic decision-making, and for measures to promote and implement women's rights through women's equal access to and control over economic resources, including land, property rights, right to inheritance, credit and traditional saving schemes.

20. In respect of the political empowerment of women, the outcome document highlights the importance of increasing women's representation in key bodies and processes at both the national and international levels. Governments are urged to set time-bound targets or measurable goals, including, where appropriate quotas, for achieving women's equal access to and full participation at all levels of public life, in particular the participation of indigenous women and older women. The outcome document encourages the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels and the achievement of gender balance, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical representation, in all appointments of special envoys and special representatives and of those pursuing good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General. It also stresses that women be involved at all levels of decision-making in development activities and peace processes carried out by the United Nations.

21. Institutional aspects, including mandates, strategies, mechanisms and resources, which are critical for creating an enabling environment at national, regional and international levels for the implementation of the Platform for Action, are addressed specifically in the outcome document.

22. The gender mainstreaming strategy endorsed in the Platform for Action is strongly reaffirmed and the importance of political commitment to gender mainstreaming is highlighted. The gender mainstreaming mandate of Governments and all international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, is reinforced and the focus broadened and enhanced significantly in a number of areas, for example, in relation to national development planning, social development policies and programmes, macroeconomic policies and national development programmes, budgetary processes, debt-servicing problems of developing countries and in reports to and the work of treaty bodies. Particular attention is given to taking gender dimensions into account in all peace support operations, including all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building, disarmament, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction.

23. The outcome document re-emphasizes the important role of national machineries for the

promotion of gender equality through facilitating the development, adoption and monitoring of policies, legislation, programmes and capacity-building for the empowerment of women and acting as catalysts for open public dialogue on gender equality as a societal goal. Governments are called upon to establish or reinforce existing institutional mechanisms and to strengthen the capacity of national machineries to mainstream the gender perspective in order to accelerate the empowerment of women through, inter alia, providing national machineries with the necessary resources, including through exploration of innovative funding schemes. The outcome document also encourages the development of a South-South cooperation programme to share expertise, experiences and knowledge with a view to assisting in the capacity-building of national machineries on women. The document established clear recommendations on strengthening and supporting gender units and focal points and highlighted the importance of gender-sensitive training.

24. Cooperation and coordination on the implementation of and follow-up to the Platform for Action and the outcome document at the national, regional and international levels are emphasized. Governments are also invited to strengthen their partnerships with non-governmental organizations, civil society, trade unions, the media and the private sector. In a number of critical areas, Governments, intergovernmental bodies and the United Nations and other international organizations are invited to establish mechanisms of collaboration that include non-governmental organizations and civil society, for example, in developing an international consensus on indicators and ways to measure violence against women, intensifying cooperation between States of origin, transit and destination to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and encouraging partnerships and cooperation with regard to poverty eradication initiatives focused on women and girls.

25. The outcome document called for continued international cooperation to increase the flow of resources for the achievement of the goals of the Platform for Action, including the reaffirmation to strive to fulfil the yet to be attained internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries for overall official development assistance, and support for the Cologne initiative for the reduction of debt and the 20/20 initiative. The identification and achievement of development-oriented and durable solutions that integrate a gender perspective into external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries was called for, inter alia, through debt relief, in order to help developing countries to finance programmes and projects targeted at development, including the advancement of women.

B. Implementation and follow-up at the national level

1. Action by Governments

26. The responsibility of Governments for implementing the Platform for Action and the recommendations in the outcome document was stated in the Political Declaration and the outcome document (General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex). Governments, with assistance from regional and international organizations as needed, are called upon, for example, to: incorporate a gender perspective as a dimension of development into national development planning; strengthen efforts to fully implement national action plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action, including through the establishment of action-oriented programmes and measures with clear targets and evaluation mechanisms; and strengthen or establish, where appropriate, national collaborative and regular reporting mechanisms, with the participation of non-governmental organizations, to monitor progress made towards the achievement of gender equality.

27. Governments are called upon to design and implement policies that promote and protect women's enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and a gender-sensitive legal environment, including through the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and ensure that national legislative and administrative reform processes take measures to promote the rights of women through access to and control over economic resources.

28. To support the implementation of the recommendations on the 12 critical areas of the Platform for Action and the recommendations in the outcome document, Governments are called upon to

provide national statistical offices with institutional and financial support so as to provide policy makers and the public with the statistics and indicators required for gender-based analysis, monitoring and impact assessment; develop national capacity to undertake policy-oriented and gender-related research and impact studies by universities and research/training institutes; ensure that the design of all government information policies and strategies is gender-sensitive; strengthen awareness-raising campaigns and other efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes; and strengthen gender equality training, and encourage and implement curriculum changes in training for public officials to make them fully gender-sensitive.

2. Action by the United Nations system

29. There was agreement that organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, we well as the World Trade Organization and regional entities, should support the efforts by Governments in the implementation of the Platform for Action and, where appropriate, develop complementary programmes of their own. The role of non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society was also re-emphasized.

C. Implementation and follow-up at the international level

1. Action by intergovernmental bodies and treaty bodies

30. Governments agreed in the Political Declaration to assess regularly further implementation of the Platform for Action. The three-tiered intergovernmental structure established in the Platform for Action and by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995 for monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action, including gender mainstreaming, that is, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, remains in place. Modalities for enhancing the follow-up to the Platform for Action and the complementary outcome document will be considered by all intergovernmental bodies.

(a) General Assembly

31. Regular reporting to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women should continue to be the primary mechanism for providing information on follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document. The Special Adviser for Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, will continue to identify new ways and means of making these reports effective instruments for monitoring progress by intergovernmental bodies.

32. The Platform for Action confirmed the principal policy-making and appraisal responsibilities of the General Assembly on matters relating to the follow-up to implementation. As such, the Assembly should continue to incorporate gender perspectives throughout its work. The Assembly may wish to strengthen follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action and the agreements reached in the outcome document by ensuring it is an integral part of the work of all of its committees.

(b) Economic and Social Council

33. The role of the Economic and Social Council in promoting gender mainstreaming and overseeing system-wide coordination was endorsed in the Platform for Action and, accordingly, the Council has developed a systematic focus on gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The General Assembly may wish to invite the Council to continue to review the implementation of the Platform for Action and to review that of the outcome document, taking into account the reports of the Commission on the Status of Women, and make recommendations in that regard, and to require that all future reports submitted to the Council fully incorporate a gender perspective.

34. Based on the experience gained over the past five years, the high-level coordination, humanitarian and operational activities segments of the work of the Council provide opportunities to further policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation towards the achievement of the objectives of the Platform for Action and the outcome document. In paragraph 5 of its agreed conclusions 2000/2 of 27 July 2000,[7] the Council reiterated that it would continue to promote a better coordination among the functional commissions. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to invite the Council, on the basis of the recommendation contained in paragraph 321 of the Platform for Action,

to encourage all functional commissions to strengthen the integration of gender aspects in their respective programmes of work. The work already done in this regard, for example, by the Commission on Population and Development or the Commission on Human Rights, could serve as examples of good practice for the other commissions.

35. The efforts of the Economic and Social Council to support an integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits could reinforce the cross-cutting nature of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and ensure the full incorporation of that outcome in the follow-up activities of all organizations of the United Nations system. In its coordination segment in 2000, the Council for the first time undertook a comprehensive assessment of conference review processes. In its efforts to improve future review processes, the Council, in paragraph 8 of its agreed conclusions 2000/2, invited its relevant functional commissions to consider options for enhancing the reviews of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and to inform the Council for its consideration at its substantive session in 2001 of the outcome of their discussion. The views and experience of the Commission on the Status of Women serving as preparatory committee for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly should provide a valuable contribution to this discussion.

(c) Commission on the Status of Women

36. The Commission on the Status of Women, as the principal intergovernmental body responsible for issues of gender equality, will continue to assist the Economic and Social Council in the follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action and to assist also in the implementation of the outcome document. The Commission will be drawing up its new work programme at its forty-fifth session, to be held in March 2001, and determining its role in the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly and the further implementation of the Platform for Action, and as well as the implementation of the outcome document. In view of the importance given to gender equality issues in other conference review processes, such as the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the Assembly on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and beyond, attention should be placed on increased synergy with the other functional commissions.

37. The preparation of the new multi-year work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women provides an opportunity for increasing such synergy. The Commission is expected to consider the modalities for maximizing its contribution to the follow-up to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including through monitoring of implementation, policy development with respect to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action, and the Political Declaration and the outcome document arising from the special session. Consideration should also be given as to how the Commission could best contribute to other review processes, such as the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly in 2001 on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)[8] and any future conference and summit reviews, such as the review in 2001 of the implementation of Agenda 21[9] and of the outcome of the World Summit for Children (A/45/625, annex), as well as to other important events, such as the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development. The Commission may also consider the types of input it wishes to obtain from other commissions to its own work.

38. The Secretary-General intends to put forward proposals to the Commission on the Status of Women at its next session to assist it in developing its work programme to support implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document, including the strengthening of its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities, as well as proposals on how secretariat support to the Commission can be enhanced, in particular in terms of supporting collaboration with other functional commissions and the organizations of the United Nations system in the integrated follow-up to global conferences and summits.

39. The General Assembly may wish to invite the Economic and Social Council to review and strengthen the mandate of the Commission on the Status of

Women, so as to enable it to continue to play a central role, within the United Nations system, in monitoring and advancing the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document, and in assisting the Council in that regard.

(d) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

40. The important role of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in ensuring the human rights of women was highlighted in the Platform for Action, and the outcome document underscored the need for human rights activities to take into account a gender perspective.

41. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Committee reflected on its role in support of the implementation of the Platform for Action, including through the amendment of its reporting guidelines. The Committee is expected to consider the implications for its work of the agreements reached in the outcome document.

42. One of the commitments of the Platform for Action, the elaboration of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, was fulfilled when the General Assembly, by resolution 54/4 of 6 October 1999, adopted it and opened it for signature, ratification and accession. At the time of preparation of the present report, the Optional Protocol had been ratified or acceded to by five States parties and will enter into force three months after the receipt of five further ratifications. The Secretary-General will continue to provide coordinated secretariat support to the Committee so as to enable it to fulfil all of its tasks in accordance with article 17 (9) of the Convention, including its second annual session.

43. The specific demands made upon the Division for the Advancement of Women as a result of the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women concern the two procedures it established, including that for individual communications and enquiries. The Division will be required to support the Committee in its determination of admissibility of individual communications, interim measures in urgent cases, consideration of the merits of communications, and follow-up procedures. With regard to the enquiry procedure established by article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Division will be required to support the Committee in administering that procedure, which may involve visits to the State party concerned.

44. The outcome document also envisages the provision by the United Nations of assistance to States parties, upon their request, in building capacity to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is expected that States parties will require assistance with regard to the reporting procedure established by the Convention, and with respect to the procedures established by the Protocol. Together, the effective implementation of the procedures envisaged under the Optional Protocol and the necessary capacity-building requested by States parties will have requirements that need to be assessed in the light of Assembly resolution 54/4, in which the Secretary-General is requested to provide the staff and facilities necessary for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Protocol after its entry into force, bearing in mind that the promotion of the enjoyment by women of their human rights is central to the overall efforts for the advancement of their status.

2. Action by the United Nations and its system of organizations

(a) United Nations

45. The commitment of the Secretary-General to continue to coordinate policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and for encouraging assessment of the policy, operational and institutional implications of the outcome document for all parts of the United Nations system is clear. The Secretary-General will continue to take a leadership role in the systematic follow-up to and evaluation of the gender mainstreaming mandate throughout the United Nations system, as outlined in the Platform for Action, agreed conclusions 1997/2 adopted by the Economic and Social Council, and reinforced in the outcome document, including the consideration of the resource implications of gender mainstreaming at both policy and operational levels. The development of

benchmarks for assessing future progress in gender mainstreaming should be supported.

46. Taking into account the importance of increasing participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels, and in particular at the highest levels, the Secretary-General will encourage Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system to consider gender balance alongside geographical representation in the nomination of candidates to all bodies, such as committees and commissions, and as participants in United Nations activities, for example, expert group meetings and workshops. The Secretary-General, with the assistance of Governments, will seek to ensure implementation of the recommendation in the outcome document that appointments of special representatives and special envoys and of persons to any other positions that pursue good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General take into account gender balance as well as ability and equitable geographical representation.

47. The outcome document reinforces the important role of the departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat outlined both directly and indirectly in the Platform for Action. Renewed efforts will be made by all departments and offices to reflect both the Platform for Action and the outcome document in their policies and programmes. A gender perspective should be explicitly reflected in medium-term plans, programme budgets, and programme performance reports and evaluations. Planning, budgeting and internal oversight processes are key elements in this regard, and departments and offices working in these areas should increase the attention paid to gender perspective. The General Assembly may wish to invite the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to take greater account of gender perspective in budgeting processes and increase attention to a gender perspective in medium-term plans, programme budgets and programme performance reports and evaluations.

48. The inextricable links between peace, and equality between women and men, and the need for women to participate fully in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts were recognized by the Security Council in the statement issued by its President on 8 March 2000 and in its resolution 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000. In this connection, and as noted above, the gender mainstreaming mandate with regard to peace-support operations, humanitarian support and disarmament has been strengthened significantly in the outcome document. Consequently, departments working in these areas are expected to accelerate their efforts, in collaboration with all relevant parts of the United Nations system, to incorporate a gender perspective as an integral part of all substantive work, policies and programmes, in particular in the preparation of reports of individual missions submitted to the Security Council, and provide gender-sensitive training in peacekeeping operations for all actors in these areas. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and other relevant intergovernmental bodies should be encouraged to support and monitor this work.

49. Pursuant to paragraph 331 of the Platform for Action, parts of the Secretariat involved in human resource management have a key responsibility in developing strategies to meet the goal of 50/50 gender balance between women and men on posts at the Professional level and above in order to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and in facilitating increased attention to training programmes to develop capacity on gender mainstreaming.

50. The important contribution of regional activities to the realization of conference goals is also recognized in the outcome document which encourages the Economic and Social Council to request the regional commissions to build up a database on all programmes and projects carried out in their respective regions by agencies or organizations of the United Nations system, and to facilitate their dissemination, as well as the evaluation of their impact on the empowerment of women through the implementation of the Platform for Action. The regional commissions should continue to facilitate regional implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document, including through the provision of support to women's empowerment and increased gender mainstreaming in all activities of the regional commissions and the development of programmes to support the objectives of the Platform for Action and the outcome document.

(b) United Nations system

51. The outcome document reiterates the call in the Platform for Action for the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as the World Trade Organization, within their mandates, to

support governmental efforts and, as appropriate, to develop complementary programmes of their own to achieve full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document. The specific implications of the outcome document for work programmes should be considered as a high priority within each entity. In this regard, attention is drawn to the statement by the Administrative Committee on Coordination submitted to the General Assembly at its special session, which identified commitments to intensified action in support of implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming (A/S-23/8, annex).

52. The United Nations system, along with other international and regional organizations, is called upon in paragraph 353 of the Platform for Action to allocate adequate financial resources to national programmes for the implementation of the Platform for Action in its 12 critical areas. The outcome document further requests that these bodies, upon request, assist Governments in: incorporating a gender perspective into national development planning, building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action; developing gender-sensitive strategies for the delivery of assistance and, where appropriate, responses to humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflict and natural disasters; and building capacity to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The United Nations, and other regional and international organizations, including financial institutions, are called upon to assist Governments in their efforts to institute action-oriented programmes and measures to accelerate the full implementation of the Platform for Action, with time-bound targets and/or measurable goals and evaluation methods, including gender impact assessments, with full participation of women; developing methods for and compiling statistics on the contributions of women and men to society and the economy, and the socio-economic situation of women and men, in particular in relation to poverty.

53. The outcome document calls upon the United Nations system to continue to implement and follow-up the mandated work to mainstream gender perspectives into all policy-making, planning processes and programmes, as outlined in agreed conclusions adopted by the Economic and Social Council, including through the integrated and coordinated follow-up to all major United Nations conferences and summits and to ensure the allocation of sufficient resources and maintenance of gender units and focal point to achieve this end and to provide training on gender mainstreaming to all United Nations staff and ensure appropriate follow-up to such training.

54. The efforts of the United Nations system to support the implementation of and follow-up to the Platform for Action and the outcome document will continue to be elaborated in the system-wide medium-term plan. The preparation of the plan for 2001-2005, scheduled to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 2001 through the Commission on the Status of Women, will provide an opportunity to build upon the lessons learned in the preparation and implementation of previous plans and to devise strategies and approaches that will most effectively lead to a coordinated, system-wide follow-up, which would include the integration of the actions and initiatives set forth in the outcome document in the work programmes of the entities of the United Nations system.

55. In the outcome document, United Nations organizations working with development activities are called upon to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into all operational activities and that women participate fully at all levels of decision-making and implementation, including as resident coordinators. The implications of the strong focus in the outcome document on gender mainstreaming need to be considered in relation to the development of common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Entities within the United Nations Secretariat dealing with social development also have a particularly important role to play in this regard. In addition, the outcome document reaffirms the need to give attention to women as well as men in development-oriented approaches to disarmament.

56. Given the increased focus in the outcome document on the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into macroeconomic policies and programme development, including budgets and debt relief, and trade activities, as well as the specific call for the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization to support governmental efforts and, where appropriate, develop complementary programmes of their own, the Administrative

Committee on Coordination, including its Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, should encourage and support the heads of United Nations system entities, including the relevant departments and offices of the Secretariat, to achieve full implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document.

57. Pursuant to paragraph 326 of the Platform for Action and General Assembly resolution 50/203, the Secretary-General established a high-level post of Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The incumbent advises the Secretary-General on global gender equality issues and advocates and is responsible for monitoring the incorporation of a gender perspective into the overall policy goals and programmes of the Organization, in conjunction with the work of the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and identifying and advising the Secretary-General on issues of particular concern to women globally or in specific areas, including through undertaking inter-agency missions, such as the mission to Afghanistan in 1997. In addition, the Special Adviser oversees and guides the activities of the Division for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of the Platform for Action and other mandates. Another of the major functions of the Special Adviser is to advise and assist in the design of policies and strategies to achieve the targets for improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat and foster improved working conditions, in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management and departmental programme managers. The Special Adviser will continue to have a critical role in advising the Secretary-General and in carrying out her other responsibilities.

58. Within the United Nations system, the Administrative Committee on Coordination will continue to play a key role in contributing to the coordinated implementation of the Platform for Action and outcome document at the regional and national levels, through the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The statement submitted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the General Assembly at its special session (A/S-23/8), together with the mandates provided in the outcome document, provide the basis for strengthened incorporation of a gender perspective into the work of all United Nations entities and contribute to the integrated follow-up to global conferences.

59. The Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, with a membership of over 60 representatives of United Nations agencies, funds, programmes, and departments and offices of the Secretariat, has worked with other subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, especially the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, to assign higher priority to gender issues in their work. It is expected that the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in particular through such subsidiary bodies as the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, will continue to coordinate efforts to attain fully gender equality goals and incorporate a gender perspective into the work of the organizations of the United Nations system.

60. The Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality will continue to support and monitor the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document throughout the United Nations system. Although progress in gender mainstreaming has been achieved during the five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women, more work needs to be done, in particular in terms of supporting the existing gender focal point systems and developing adequate training programmes.

61. Some agencies have reported that they are incorporating decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session into their ongoing work programmes for the implementation of the Platform for Action. These will be further elaborated in the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women. Special attention will be paid to those aspects of the Platform for Action that were highlighted or strengthened in the outcome document. The Inter-agency Committee also intends to look more closely at collaboration and coordination efforts in the new system-wide medium-term plan in the areas of eliminating violence against women, incorporating a gender perspective and increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping and peacemaking processes, and developing a more routine way of involving women and girls fully in new information technologies and in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Inter-agency Committee, under the

guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and in collaboration with relevant human resource management bodies, will increase the attention given to developing policies and strategies for promoting equal opportunities, including gender balance, throughout the United Nations system.

62. The adoption of the outcome document provides new opportunities and creates new demands for the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the principal entity within the United Nations Secretariat dealing with the promotion of gender equality. It will allow the Division to strengthen the incorporation of a gender perspective into policy formulation and coordination, and the substantive servicing of intergovernmental machinery and treaty bodies, especially the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and through gender advisory services. The effective substantive support of the intergovernmental machinery requires, however, the involvement and cooperation of all organizations of the United Nations system. The Division will therefore continue to play a crucial role in maintaining collaboration with all parts of the United Nations system, including through the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

63. New demands will also be created in respect of the substantive servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, with particular attention being required in relation to the Committee's functions under the Optional Protocol. The Division, together with other relevant United Nations and other bodies, will also be called on to provide assistance to States parties, upon their request, in building capacity to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The outcome document builds upon the Platform for Action, as well as previous and subsequent intergovernmental decisions, in highlighting the importance of elimination of violence against women. In this regard, the Division will need to enhance its capacity, including through the development and expansion of its database on the subject. The Division, being responsible for the substantive servicing of the Committee, has a key role to play in coordinating activities with regard to the Convention and the Committee, including with respect to capacity-building for governmental officials and other actors. In this context, the human and financial resource implications of the outcome of the special session should be considered, building upon the request, in paragraph 327 of the Platform for Action, that sufficient human and financial resources be ensured for the Division within the regular budget of the United Nations.

64. The mandate of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was outlined in paragraph 335 of the Platform for Action as increasing options and opportunities for women's economic and social development in developing countries by providing technical and financial assistance to incorporate the women's dimension into development, focusing on women's political and economic empowerment, two areas in which the discussions at the special session highlighted the need for much increased attention.

65. The Assembly may wish to encourage UNIFEM to continue to play a key role in implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document at the country level, including through the UNIFEM gender specialists in the field, by consolidating its operational role in promoting women's economic and political empowerment, and continuing to support women's organizations in order to increase leadership opportunities for women in all areas of societal development. Within its mandate, and pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 54/134 and 54/136 of 17 December 1999, UNIFEM should also continue its priority focus on facilitating work at the country level on the elimination of violence against women in the broader context of promotion of women's human rights, as well as its support for strengthening the capacities of women living in conflict situations and the promotion of women's enhanced role and participation in peace processes.

66. The mandate of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as outlined in paragraph 334 of the Platform for Action, to promote research and training on women's situations and development has been reinforced by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/54 of 29 July 1999, in which the Council called for the adoption of a new approach to research, training and communication through increased use of new information and communication technologies and General Assembly resolution 54/140 of 17 December 1999, on the revitalization and strengthening of INSTRAW.

67. The new approach to the implementation of the mandate of INSTRAW, the development of the gender awareness information networking system, is acknowledged in the outcome document and has been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2000/24 of 28 July 2000, in which the Council urged the provision of financial support so that INSTRAW could continue planning beyond 2000, and urged the Institute to continue to explore new and innovative means of funding. It is expected that INSTRAW will continue to develop further phases of the networking project and to seek funding from non-traditional sources.

68. As can be noted from paragraphs 30 to 67 above, implementation measures would be required by the United Nations and its system of organizations following the adoption by the General Assembly of the Political Declaration and the outcome document. At the time of preparation of the present report, it was not possible to complete all consultations concerning resource requirements, in particular given the uncertainties regarding the workload associated with the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. At the time of consideration of the report by the General Assembly, it is expected that programme budget implications in relation to other United Nations programmes will be provided.

D. Role of non-governmental organizations

69. The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly was characterized by the broad involvement of civil society in its preparation and the participation of a large number of non-governmental organizations at the special session itself. A total of 2,042 participants, representing 1,038 non-governmental organizations, attended the special session, including 272 organizations accredited by the General Assembly. In recognition of the critical contribution of non-governmental organizations, the outcome document urges the active support and participation of a broad and diverse range of institutional actors, and calls for cooperation and partnerships between Governments, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society in the implementation of and follow-up to the Platform for Action and the outcome document.

70. The General Assembly may wish to give consideration to the means of promoting the effective implementation of the provisions of the Platform for Action relating to non-governmental organizations, including the strengthening of mechanisms to enhance collaboration with them.

III. Beyond the special session: recommendations for action by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session

71. While some new areas of focus and action have been highlighted by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, both the Political Declaration and the outcome document reaffirm the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as the basic reference point for global commitment to gender equality. Consideration of the present report should serve to consolidate the commitments entered into by Governments and the international community.

72. The Secretary-General intends to take a number of steps to follow up the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document. These include:

(a) Ensuring, subject to approval by the General Assembly, that adequate resources are allocated to gender training and, within the Secretariat, inviting the Office of Human Resources Management, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, to cooperate with departments in order to ensure that United Nations personnel at Headquarters and in the field receive training on how to mainstream a gender perspective into their work, in particular in the area of peacekeeping, and to ensure appropriate follow-up to this training;

(b) Strengthening, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, with a view to further enhancing system-wide intersectoral cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document and the promotion of integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits;

(c) Continuing to support the work of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in advocating and supporting gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system, supporting equal opportunities within the United Nations, promoting women's economic and political empowerment and facilitating inter-agency collaboration on the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document;

(d) Proposals for adequate resources for the Division for the Advancement of Women to enable it to carry out all of the tasks foreseen in the outcome document, as well as in the Platform for Action, that would fall within its responsibility will be provided in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, with due regard given to the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

(e) Disseminating the Political Declaration and the outcome document as widely as possible in all official languages of the United Nations;

(f) Making special efforts to implement the recommendation in the outcome document so as to ensure that appointments to positions of special representatives and special envoys, and any other positions pursuing good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General, reflect a gender balance as well as equitable geographical representation, and that competencies in gender mainstreaming are considered a professional requirement in these and other positions;

(g) Strengthening the overall resources for gender mainstreaming throughout the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in line with the Platform for Action, the outcome document and the guidelines included in the agreed conclusions 1997/2 adopted by the Economic and Social Council, including both policy analysis and operational work, in particular through ensuring the allocation of sufficient resources and maintenance of gender units and focal points in the Secretariat to achieve this end, and allocation of resources for training of staff on gender mainstreaming.

73. The General Assembly may wish to take the following steps to support the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document:

(a) Endorse the Political Declaration and the outcome document as adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", as an extension of and complement to, and an important means for ensuring the full and effective implementation of, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

(b) Decide that a gender perspective should be incorporated into issues before the Assembly and consider modalities for the effective review of the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document on an annual basis;

(c) Ensure, when considering the report on the Millennium Assembly, that the outcome of the Assembly integrates a gender perspective, including in the consideration of poverty eradication;

(d) Take note of the strong reiteration in the outcome document of the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into budgeting processes and urge planning and budgeting bodies, especially the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administration and Budgetary Questions, to give higher priority to integrating a gender perspective in medium-term plans and programme budgets, and request the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support to facilitate their work in that regard;

(e) Welcome the statement submitted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the General Assembly at its special session (A/S-23/8), and urge the Committee to continue to bring a gender perspective to the fore in its work and actively support the work of the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, including through consideration of ways and means of providing the resources required to advance the work of the Inter-agency Committee;

74. The Assembly may also wish to request that:

(a) Governments, the United Nations system and all other actors take effective action on their political commitments to achieve full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the actions and initiatives contained in the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its special session;

(b) Governments, in collaboration with other stakeholders, translate the Political Declaration and the

outcome document into local languages and disseminate them as broadly as possible;

(c) Governments, in close collaboration with non-governmental organizations and civil society, develop specific implementation strategies which establish or strengthen national mechanisms for the advancement of women and mechanisms for incorporating a gender perspective into all policies and programmes;

(d) Governments, in close collaboration with non-governmental organizations and civil society, prepare national reports on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document for review by the Commission on the Status of Women in 2004;

(e) Governments consider gender balance as well as competence and equitable geographical representation when nominating representatives to serve in all intergovernmental bodies and committees in the United Nations, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the outcome document;

(f) Governments and the international community support the efforts of non-governmental organizations and civil society to implement the Platform for Action and the outcome document;

(g) Governments provide adequate financial support to UNIFEM and INSTRAW so as to enable them to carry out their respective mandates effectively;

(h) International and regional organizations, including the organizations of the United Nations system, support Governments in the achievement of the goals of the Platform for Action and the outcome document in the context of a coordinated and integrated follow-up to global conferences and summits and, within their mandates, take due account of the Platform for Action and the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its special session and ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective into their respective policy-making areas;

(i) International organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, mobilize resources from all sources, including from the private sector, to support Governments in furthering the implementation of the Platform for Action and outcome document;

(j) All actors in civil society, the private sector and the media contribute actively to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Platform for Action and the outcome document.

75. The Assembly may further wish to request:

(a) The Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with their respective mandates and relevant resolutions and together with the General Assembly, to continue to constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that will play the primary role in overall policy-making and follow-up, and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action and the outcome document;

(b) The Economic and Social Council to continue to utilize the high-level, coordination, humanitarian and operational activities segments of its discussions to further policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation in the achievement of the objectives of the Platform for Action and the outcome document, and require all future reports to the Council to fully incorporate a gender perspective;

(c) The Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-fifth session in 2001, to: develop a new multi-year work programme, taking into account the need to implement fully the Platform for Action and the outcome document and to integrate them into its work programme; consider the need to develop further its catalytic role in mainstreaming gender perspectives in United Nations activities; and report on the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council;

(d) The United Nations Development Fund for Women, to continue to promote women's political and economic empowerment and the elimination of violence against women at the country level;

(e) The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to continue to develop new approaches, such as the gender awareness information and networking system, and to seek innovative means of funding.

76. The Assembly may also wish to:

(a) Invite all United Nations entities involved with development activities, especially the United Nations (UNDP) and UNIFEM, to ensure the

incorporation of a gender perspective into operational activities, in particular gender issues that are explicitly addressed in the development of common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making and implementation of development activities, in particular as resident coordinators, as called for in the outcome document;

(b) Invite all United Nations entities involved with peace support operations, disarmament and humanitarian assistance to: take note of the importance given in the outcome document to the incorporation of a gender perspective into all peace support operations, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building; develop gender-sensitive strategies; ensure the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making, in particular in the promotion of peace; provide gender-sensitive training to all actors; ensure the protection of women and children, including those who are refugees and displaced persons, in crisis situations; and invite the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant intergovernmental bodies to support and monitor this work;

(c) Take note of the attention given in the outcome document to the incorporation of a gender perspective into macroeconomic and trade policies and programmes and invite the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization to support governmental efforts and, where appropriate, to develop strategies and complementary programmes of their own to achieve full implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome document and to ensure that a gender perspective is addressed as an integral part of their work;

(d) Welcome the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by States since the Fourth World Conference on Women but note that the target of universal ratification by 2000 has not been achieved, and thus strongly urge those States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so, and invite States parties to the Convention on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to consider signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to that Convention;

(e) In view of the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, emphasize the need for the Secretary-General to ensure that adequate human and financial resources are made available to support the effective functioning of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including mechanisms for the effective implementation of the Optional Protocol, the dissemination of information on the Convention and the provision of assistance to States parties on implementation of the Convention.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, sect. A.

[3] See *Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.IV.6).

[4] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[5] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[6] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. V.

[8] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[9] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.